

Chicopee Register

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Vigil held as search for missing boy continues

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

CHICOPEE – A vigil was held Wednesday evening near where an 11-year-old Chicopee was last sighted two weeks ago. Aiden Blanchard disappeared in proximity to the Medina Street boat launch on Feb. 5, and the community continues to search for answers.

On Feb. 17, dozens of residents gathered near the launch, offering their emotional support to the Blanchard family. Dan Leatherwood organized the vigil to remind the family that they are not alone in their strife.

"We go through this together as a community," Leatherwood said. "Chicopee itself is a community that comes together during times of need, and there's definitely support from all over Western Mass. It's about having hope and showing that support."

No sign of Blanchard has been discovered as of Feb. 17, although Chicopee, state and environmental police continue to comb the Connecticut River near the boat launch on Medina Street. The Chicopee River has also been searched.

Blanchard is a sixth-grade student at Edward J. Bellamy Middle School. His five siblings are holding out hope that



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTOS BY DALTON ZBIERSKI.

The Malo family expressed support for the Blanchard family during a vigil held on Wednesday evening. Aiden Blanchard, 11, has been missing since Feb. 5.

he will return safely, as were other residents who attended Wednesday evening's vigil.

"I just keep them in my prayers," Debbie Miner said during the vigil. "I can't even imagine what they're going through right now. I have a nine-year-old grandson. It

bothers me immensely that this can happen to an 11-year-old child, and nobody knows anything. I've been crying a lot over it."

Kimi Malo also arrived at the boat launch with her family on Feb. 17. Both of her daughters ride the bus with

Blanchard, since the Malo residence is a street over from Blanchards'.

Malo encouraged the community to send out positive thoughts and prayers that 11-year-old Blanchard will

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COMMUNITY

Chicopee pushes for municipal vaccination site

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

CHICOPEE – The city of Chicopee has completed the paperwork necessary to request the state's approval to operate a COVID-19 vaccine distribution site. The proposed clinic would operate out of the lower level of the RiverMills Center, home of the Council on Aging, at 5 W. Main St.

"It's being spearheaded by Fire Chief Stamborski and Lisa Sanders, our health director. It's a concerted effort with the COA and their staff – they want to help our older adults and will be a friendly face when they come in for their vaccine," Mayor John Vieau said during his Feb. 16 briefing.

From software to staffing, city leadership believes the bases are covered. On Feb. 17, Chicopee submitted its request to host a site that will offer 100 vaccines per day, five days per week.

"We're hopeful, and have been hearing, that we'll get our 100 per week. As much as we're requesting 500 per week, and we have the capac-

ity to do that and could easily do that and more, we're hearing we'll be lucky to get 100," Vieau said.

The upper level of the RiverMills Center already operates as the city's municipal COVID-19 testing site. COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Chicopee, but with much less ferocity than the numbers observed early last month.

As of Tuesday evening this week, the city had 410 active cases of COVID-19. Throughout the course of the pandemic, a total of 3,203 cases have been reported, as of Feb. 16.

Vieau reported that 23 residents have died of the novel coronavirus since it arrived in Chicopee last March. During that same timespan, 2,659 residents have recovered. He hopes the city could soon exit the red category – the state's most severe COVID-19 risk designation.

"Our numbers look pretty good," Vieau said. "We had 24 new cases over the weekend, which was three days.

Please see **VACCINE**, page 3

COMMUNITY

Celebrating the life of Brad Leveillee



Employees at Brad's Service Center celebrated the life of Brad Leveillee during a Feb. 12 drive-in wake.

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

CHICOPEE – From Boston to Nashville, hundreds of community members traveled to Brad's Service Center on Front Street last Friday to celebrate the remarkable life of Brad Leveillee.

Brad Leveillee, who owned and operated the nationally recognized auto repair shop for more than 40 years, passed away of natural causes earlier this month.

On Feb. 12, the business hosted a drive-in wake to pay homage to Brad Leveillee,

who left a positive impression on friends, family and thousands of customers over his decades in business.

"He built this incredible place and poured his heart and soul into it. The little details mattered to him, and that's how he made it happen. He touched so many people," said Peyton Leveillee, Brad's son.

On Nov. 19, 1979, at age 19, Brad Leveillee leased a pumping station, established a business and set his sights on prosperity. From its humble beginnings, the business rose

Please see **BRAD**, page 5



FIRE

Tetreault promoted to fire lieutenant

See Page 12



COMMUNITY

Registry donates to Lorraine's

See Page 3



EDUCATION

High schools offer guidance during pandemic

See Page 2



SPORTS

Pacers spoil Tigers return

See Page 7

Correction

There was an error in an article titled "Council approves second phase of City Hall rehabilitation design" which ran in the Feb. 5 edition of the Chicopee Register. The exterior ramp and stairs that were included in the article's photograph are actually new and were completed as part of the City Hall Phase I project. The new system, as installed, corrected several ADA and MAAB deficiencies that existed with the original system that was removed in the fall and the new system now complies with all requirements.

As part of the City Hall Phase II Rehabilitation project, an existing lift that provides ADA/MAAB accessible access from the Annex connector into the main City Hall Building (where the Mayor's Office and Law Department are located) will be replaced with a new vertical lift. The current lift is outdated, difficult to maintain, and no longer fulfills ADA/MAAB requirements. This system will be replaced with a compliant system as part of the Phase II project, according to Lee Pouliot, Director of the Department of Planning & Development.

Parade Committee launches March Money Madness fundraiser

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee St. Patrick's Parade Committee is once again selling "March Money Madness" calendars to benefit the committee's activities.

Calendars are \$10 each and give the purchaser 31 chances to win. A drawing is held every day during the month of March. Prizes range from \$50 to \$300.

Proceeds from calendar sales will support the committee's current expenses and future activities. Although the 2020 and 2021 Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parades were canceled, rent for storing the Colleen's float and other expenses still need to be paid. The committee has also begun planning events leading up to the 2022 parade, which promises to be bigger and better than ever.

Calendars can be purchased

by calling Haley at (413) 426-6825, or by contacting any committee member. More information is also available on the committee's Facebook page.

Watch the Committee's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/chicopeespc/> beginning on March 1 for results of the raffle drawings, which will be posted daily.

The Chicopee St. Patrick's Parade Committee strives to promote Irish pride and culture through its many events. For over 65 years, the committee has organized the annual Colleen Contest and Coronation Ball, constructed the Colleen's award-winning float for the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, and awarded scholarships to young women who plan to further their education at a college or university.

Robert Sexton of Chicopee makes Dean's List at RIT

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Robert Sexton of Chicopee was named to the Dean's List at Rochester Institute of Technology for the 2020 Fall Semester. Sexton is in the computing and information technologies program.

Undergraduate students are eligible for Dean's List if their GPA is greater than or equal to 3.40 for nine credits of traditionally graded coursework; they do not have any grades of "Incomplete," NE, D, or F; and they have registered for, and completed, at least 12 credit hours.

Horizons seeking volunteers

HOLYOKE/SPRINGFIELD – With more than 20,000 children under the age of six experiencing homelessness this past year, Horizons for Homeless Children has a high need for volunteers to play with homeless children in Holyoke and Springfield.

"We have a need for volunteer Playspace Activity Leaders to provide two hours of healing play each week to homeless children in Holyoke and Springfield," staff members said.

Online trainings are scheduled for Sat., Feb. 27, from 9:30-11:30 a.m., or Tues., March 2, from 6-8 p.m.

High schools aim to offer steady guidance, support during pandemic

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

CHICOPEE – Each year, the guidance counselors at Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School play a significant role in the lives and development of students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, counselors have elevated their performance to meet the challenges at hand.

"When you're young, everything can seem so detrimental," said Robin Bineau, Head Counselor at Chicopee Comp. "When you're 15 or 16, you don't understand how vast your life is. Everyone is affected by this [pandemic] no matter how old you are. Imagine trying to cope with this when you're 16 because you don't have all of the skills to cope yet."

Creating availability for all students has been a priority for counselors at both schools. When dealing with thousands of different personalities, it is imperative for counselors to approach each day with an open mind.

For the past 11 months, face-to-face interactions have been nearly implausible, but countless meetings have occurred over virtual platforms. Phone calls and email correspondence are particularly valuable, as different students have a range of preferences.

"We often ask students what their preferred mode of contact is; if they are uncomfortable with being on camera, they are less likely to open up or let us know what is going on or what they need. Some students prefer to talk over the phone, or through Google Chat or email," said Laura Kinney, a school counselor at Chicopee High.

Prior to the start of the school year, the city hired Social Emotional Director Abbey Tenczar to assist counselors at both institutions. Tenczar has introduced a variety new programs, webinars and professional development opportunities to the district.

The primary responsibilities of

counselors remain largely the same, as they've found new, creative methods to meet students' needs. Each week presents new obstacles, which Chicopee's counselors are working diligently to hurdle.

"Our days literally range from someone applying to an Ivy League college to someone going to the hospital because their appendix burst to DCF to issues about people being deported to someone learning to speak English to 'Can I get switched out of this class?' to someone struggling with a mental health issue," Bineau said.

Counselors monitor the well-being of their students, helping to identify solutions to their mental health needs. A team effort is required to navigate the broad spectrum of mental health during a pandemic.

"We rely on teachers and parents to reach out to us to share concerns about their students. Some students will advocate for themselves and reach out to us, especially if we already have had an established relationship," said Kinney.

Surveying students on a monthly basis has become an invaluable technique. Self and social awareness surveys allow counselors to become more familiar with students' social and emotional needs.

As students cope with the unpredictability of the pandemic, and not knowing if an end is in sight, sports and extracurricular activities have been a saving grace. At Comp., such activities have served as a great connector.

"We have something like over 400 kids per season play sports. Our school has 1,200 kids, so a third of the kids in the building play sports," said Bineau, adding that students are also virtually engaging in activities such as band practice.

Many students are also taking dual enrollment classes at Holyoke Community College or Springfield Technical Community College, earning college credits.

Kinney acknowledged that many students "are struggling with motivation for remote learning, over-

whelmed with keeping up with class-work and feeling socially isolated."

To combat feelings of loneliness, both schools have gone to great lengths to facilitate a sense of normalcy. Engaging in the college application process has continued virtually during the pandemic.

"Zoom info sessions for college exploration has made college tours accessible to many more students without having to plan for travel," said Kinney. "In addition, our Career Center has been able to hold virtual events such as a Financial Aid Night and College Application Week for both CHS and Chicopee Comp."

Since the pandemic hit locally last March, counselors at both institutions have familiarized themselves with new forms of technology. In addition to facilitating virtual learning, technology has enabled staff members to learn themselves, as colleagues often meet virtually to discuss new strategies.

Most importantly, counselors are prioritizing self-care. Be it exercising, doing yoga, reading, making art or watching Netflix, counselors are encouraged to include time for themselves in their busy schedules.

"It's important to keep getting up every day and going on," said Bineau. "If we are not healthy, we can't help your children. If we're not okay, we can't help anybody else."

Both schools welcome parent inquiries. Kinney wants to remind parents that many facets of the pandemic cannot be controlled, but it is important to remind children and teenagers to control their emotions and remain resilient, as the pandemic will not last forever.

"Support strengthening coping skills and using our energy to focus on the things we have control over rather than perseverating on the things we have no control over," said Kinney. "Remind them that they are not alone. Help them identify who they can turn to for support and encourage them to use those resources."



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IN THE CITY

Hampden County Registry donates to Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry



The Hampden County Registry donated boxes of non-perishable food items to Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry in Chicopee on Fri., Feb. 12.



VACCINE from page 1

That's eight per day, which means we are definitely trending toward yellow. We're hopeful that we'll achieve that in the next metric that comes out Thursday."

Frustration still looms regarding the lack of vaccines in the Commonwealth. Vieau said the dilemma is a "national problem."

Even as Chicopee works towards establishing a vaccine distribution site, the state favors and is promoting regional sites, said Vieau, after a Feb. 12 call with Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito.

In Eastern Massachusetts, eligible residents can be vaccinated at well-kept sites including Fenway Park in Boston, Gillette Stadium in Foxboro and the DoubleTree by Hilton Boston North Shore in Danvers.

Meanwhile, in Western Massachusetts, vaccines are being distributed at the aging Eastfield Mall in Springfield. Vieau is among many local and state officials who have criticized the location, which has earned a widespread reputation for being dirty and out-of-date long before the pandemic, he said.

"People don't like to shop at the Eastfield Mall, let alone get a vaccine [there]," Vieau said.

Currently, residents 75 and older are eligible to receive a vaccine, under Step 1 of Phase II in the distribution timeline. The Chicopee COA is willing to help seniors make their appointments and has seven open phone lines available at (413) 534-3698.

However, vaccines are limited, and it likely won't be until July that enough vaccines will be available for distribution to

the general public, Vieau said, referencing President Joe Biden's prediction.

Vieau isn't satisfied with the availability that currently exists. From his perspective, the 106,000 vaccines that are made available in the Commonwealth each week are far from being enough.

"It's simply not where they expected to be. They expected to be getting much more than that," said Vieau. "Our goal is to continue to fight for our fair share of doses, and that's the bottom line. When they become available, they become available, and we'll try to get them into people's arms."

Chicopee will lobby for Moderna vaccines, as the city doesn't have the capability to facilitate the low temperatures required to store other brands. And Vieau continues to preach patience and diligence to residents in the meantime.

Even after being vaccinated, one can still contract COVID-19, he added. To accentuate his point, Vieau quoted Rep. Michael Finn of the 6th Hampden District.

"Rep. Finn said that wearing body armor doesn't mean that you run in front of machine gun fire. I think it's a great analogy for COVID-19. Just because you've been vaccinated doesn't mean you can't catch COVID-19 and spread it to someone else," said Vieau.

Washing hands, wearing masks, physical distancing and adhering to other protocols will remain necessary for the foreseeable future. As the city prepares to face off with new variants of the virus, officials continue to be on high alert.

"Even with the vaccine, you're not immune. I hope that message gets out to people. Once you're vaccinated, it doesn't mean you burn your mask and have a party," said Vieau.

CHICOPEE – The Hampden County Registry last week donated boxes of non-perishable food items to Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry in Chicopee.

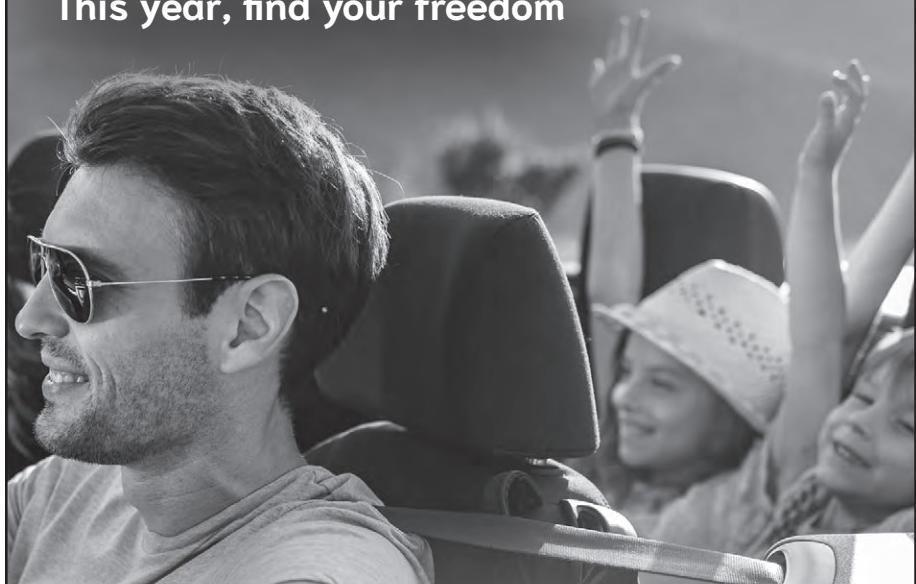
Hampden County Register of Deeds Cheryl Coakley-Rivera and Registry employees wanted to give back during these tough times, especially when so many people are in need.

"For several weeks, employees collected the food items and on Friday, February 12th we delivered our donation to Lorraine's," Registry staff said in a statement. "Employees at the office wanted to give back and help others."



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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Should I Wait Until Age 70 To Claim?

By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I have read your answers to the commonly asked question of "When should I claim social security benefits." You always say one should wait as long as possible, up to age 70, to get the maximum monthly benefit. But I have not seen you address the matter of all the money you could have collected if you start drawing sooner and how many years it will take, if you wait, to recoup all that money.

I am now 64. I have always planned to wait until at least 66 and possibly to 70 to start collecting. I have no health issues and expect to live well into my 90s. When I tell people this, they question why I am leaving so much money on the table by waiting. At age 66 I'd get \$1,671 per month and, at 70, \$2,161. Between those two ages I could collect \$73,524. It will take me many years to recoup all that money if I wait until 70 to begin, right? When I consider this, I question why I am waiting. Please help clear up my confusion and tell me whether I am doing the right thing by waiting to claim. Signed: Confused Senior

Dear Confused: You are correct that I always try to make people aware of their option to get a bigger Social Security benefit by waiting longer to claim. But I also always stress that the decision to do that should consider several things - most notably, current need for the money, health, and anticipated longevity. Said another way, delaying until age 70 doesn't make much sense if you won't live long enough to at least "break even." Nevertheless, your point is very well taken – not a lot is written about benefits not taken when you wait until a later age to claim. I actually have written about that before, but I'm happy to evaluate your specific personal situation.

Using the numbers you provided, if you were to claim your \$1,671 benefit starting at your full retirement age (FRA) you would collect \$73,524 over the 44-month period to age 70, when you could get the \$2,161 benefit. So how long would it take to break even if you wait until age 70 to claim? Well, the difference between your age 70 benefit and your FRA benefit is \$490. So, if you wait and get the higher benefit at age 70, it will take you about 12.5 years to recover that \$73,524 (\$73,524 divided by \$490 = 150 months = 12.5 years).

So, here's where longevity comes in. According to Social Security, average longevity for a man your age today is about 84, so if you meet or exceed average longevity, you'll collect more in cumulative lifetime benefits by waiting until age 70 to claim. And you'll be getting that higher monthly benefit amount throughout your later years, a good way to offset inflation. Indeed, that higher benefit lasts for the rest of your life, and it also means a larger survivor benefit for your wife if you predecease her. As your widow, your wife will get 100% of the amount you are receiving when you pass, if she has reached her full retirement age and if her widow's benefit is more than her own. And 100% of your age 70 benefit is quite a bit more than 100% of your earlier benefits.

I hope this helps clarify your confusion about whether to claim now, or at your FRA, or to wait even longer to age 70. Here is a link to an article I previously published on this topic: www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-doing-a-break-even-analysis/. But from what you've shared with me, I don't see anything wrong with your plan to continue waiting until at least your FRA, and possibly until age 70, to claim, especially since you expect to live well into your 90s.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foun-

GUEST COLUMN

The Garden Lady tackles milk jug seed sowing, part 1

Barbara, who gardens in Wilbraham, wrote to me recently, complimenting the column (thank you!) and asking if I had any opinion of "winter sowing" seeds in re-used gallon jugs. This technique is all the rage right now on social media and in gardening blogs, and while I had read about it many years ago and again recently, I have never tried it myself. Perhaps some research into the topic would prove beneficial for me as well as my readers!

The basic premise of winter sowing is to plant your seeds in mini-greenhouses (the gallon jugs), place the jugs outside and simply let nature take over. The advantage being that no heat mats or lights are needed. No window sills full of seedlings, either. While I don't think it is as simple as it sounds, I do think trying it would be a fun experiment. Read on this week and next to consider some of the pros and possible cons of this seed starting technique.

Years ago I read a blog where a master gardener was encouraging folks to start native perennials in milk jugs outside; he called it "winter sowing." The seeds of many of these plants require a period of cold and moist stratification to break seed dormancy. In simple terms, they need to go through winter in order to sprout. Think of it as nature's safety mechanism; seeds germinate at the right time to survive and thrive! You may ask, then, why not just sow the seeds outdoors in the garden? In theory it sounds good, but in reality "the wild" is not the best seed bed. From hungry birds and rodents, to wind and drenching rains, success is hit or miss. Safely inside the milk jug, but at the same time outside in the elements to freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw, tricky seeds are coaxed into germinating. Success at your fingertips!

My method of combating tricky germinators has always been the refrigerator. By

putting seeds in moist soil in a small plastic bag and chilling them for a month or so at 40 degrees, I am usually successful at providing an abbreviated "winter," satisfying germination requirements that break dormancy. Recently, I watched a video from a wildflower specialist in Canada, who abbreviated "winter" a bit further. She simply places seeds in the fridge for 24 hours, then the freezer for 24 hours. Five times back and forth and she swears dormancy is broken.

After the period of stratification has passed, seeds are handled as normal, sown on the surface of a moist soilless mix with the provision of bottom heat and supplemental light. But what if I didn't have the props, or even enough window sills to limp along seedlings inside? Here is where I think sowing in milk jugs could be of benefit, and it goes beyond "winter" or even seeds that need specialized treatments to germinate.

More recent blogs speak of starting everything from cold-hardy annuals to heat-loving vegetables inside milk jugs, and while I don't think the method is fool-proof, or meant for the lazy gardener, I do think there is good reason to give it a try. Gather some supplies: duct tape, empty gallon jugs, decent seed starting soil, a paint pen and a selection of seeds. Perennial herbs and flowers can be sown right away and next week the how-to portion will explain exactly how to do it.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

IN THE GARDEN



Roberta McQuaid
Columnist

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

The Chicopee Register welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to chicopeeregister@turley.com or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Chicopee Register

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250 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

Send letters to: *The Chicopee Register*,

24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email chicopeeregister@turley.com.

The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon.

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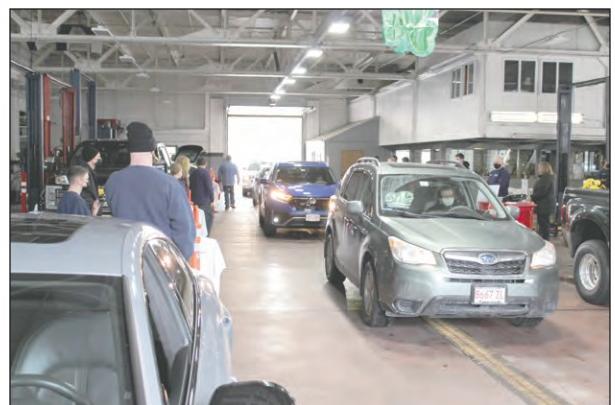
OPINION



Brad Leveillee passed away earlier this month.



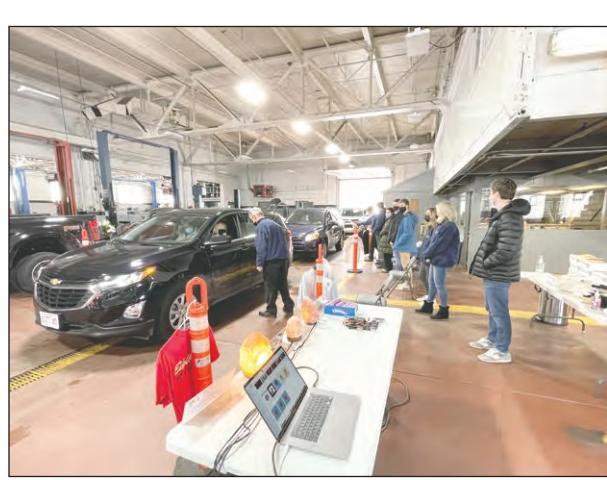
Peyton Leveillee, son of Brad Leveillee, shows appreciation for a resident who arrived at the service center last Friday to celebrate Brad's life.



Brad Leveillee owned and operated Brad's Service Center for more than 40 years.



Bret Leveillee and Cynthia Leveillee, brother and sister-in-law to the late Brad Leveillee, greet a resident who participated in last Friday's drive-in wake at the service center.



As music played, the family of Brad Leveillee celebrated his life on the afternoon of Feb. 12.



Cars lined Front Street as residents waited to offer their condolences to the family of Brad Leveillee last Friday afternoon.



Brad Leveillee, photographed for the Chicopee Register in Jan. 2020. File photo.



BRAD from page 1

to prominence and now services between 40 and 60 vehicles per day.

Brad's Service Center boasts a Blue Seal of Excellence from the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, which recognizes the business' commitment to training personnel and generating customer confidence. The center features 27 lifts, a variety of bays and approximately 20 dedicated employees.

From the diagnosis and repair of electrical problems, anti-lock brakes, drivability, emissions and airbags to tire alignments, fuel injections, oil changes and brakes, many services are provided on a daily basis at Brad's Service Center.

"I think his legacy will live on within this building, within his employees, within his children, within his family and within the community. I think the community, and all of us, are the ones who are going to miss him. To keep his legacy going, we're going to keep everything the same and do whatever we can," said Bret Leveillee, Brad's younger brother.

On Feb. 12, dozens of cars lined Front Street, waiting for an opportunity to drive through the facility and offer condolences to the Leveillee family and employees. Connor Leveillee, Brad's son, wasn't surprised by the heavy turnout.

"He always made people feel

safe and secure and he always worked his hardest. He helped the community a tremendous amount, and that love was shown both ways. Everybody loved him, and he loved everybody; that's just who he was," said Connor Leveillee.

Beyond the shop, Brad Leveillee's passion extended to auto racing. He traveled from France to Mexico and everywhere in between as a race team owner, witnessing his fair share of racing history, often alongside renowned driver Gene Felton.

Brad Leveillee's work ethic was the stuff of legend. Connor Leveillee shed light on the mindset that allowed his father to remain successful, as generations of customers poured into the shop.

"He always made sure the job was done, especially when no one was looking," said Connor Leveillee. "That was the one thing he said to me my whole life: 'Work your hardest when no one's looking, and you'll always succeed.' He was very strong-willed and always wanted to help anyone who came into the shop — always saw them as family."

In 2013, Motor Age Mag-

azine ranked Brad's Service Center as one of the top 10 automotive centers in the United States. During an interview with the Chicopee Register in January of 2020, Brad Leveillee made it clear that his passion for the industry never dwindled over the years, as he thanked his team for its tireless dedication.

"I'm truly lucky. I have a great bunch of guys," he said. "Everybody is a different personality, they make good money and they've all stuck with me. They work hard and are honest; it means a lot to me. They do their job every day swimmingly, with no questions asked."

Brad's Service Center is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. The business is open on Saturday from 8 a.m. until noon. One can reach the service center by calling or texting (413) 592-5187.

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IN THE CITY



Dan Leatherwood and Debbie Miner hold candles during a vigil to support the family of Aiden Blanchard, an 11-year-old missing child.



The Rego family is holding out hope that Aiden Blanchard will return home safely.



Chicopee Police were on-hand during a Feb. 17 vigil to support the family of a missing Chicopee boy. Law enforcement have been searching for Aiden Blanchard for the past two weeks.

VIGIL from page 1

return home unscathed. She considered the showing on Wednesday to be phenomenal.

"Positivity and staying strong for his brothers and his mother is incredibly important. Hoping that they have everything that they need right now with support from the community," Malo said.

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USDA INSP. MAPLE SMOKED 1/2 BONELESS HAM	\$1.69 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN WINGS 10 LB BAG	\$2.69 lb		
USDA INSP. ROAST BEEF	\$5.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN ROASTER CHICKEN.....	69¢ lb		
LENTEN SPECIALS		USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF \$2.77 7 LB BAG		USDA INSP. FROZEN CARROTS SLICED OR DICED	79¢ lb
USDA INSP GOLDEN PHOENIX 2 1/2 LB BAG IMITATION CRAB FLAKES	\$4.99 ea	SALE DATES: 2/18/21 - 2/24/21	90 Meat Outlet	90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com	
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Several dozen people attended a Feb. 17 vigil at the Medina Street boat ramp, as holding out hope that 11-year-old Aiden Blanchard will be recovered unharmed.

Over the past two weeks, searches of the Chicopee and Connecticut Rivers have been conducted by boat, drone, police dogs and the State Police Air Wing helicopter. The State Police Dive Team has also been searching the water near where Blanchard was last seen.

Searches have extended to the Connecticut line, and no evidence has been discovered showing Blanchard's direction of travel or whereabouts.

Ronnie Roberts has lived near the Medina Street location for decades. He remembers the installation of the boat launch when he was a child. He also noted the dangers of the quickly flowing river.

"I never went out on the ice as a kid. I always was afraid of it, because it's moving water," said Roberts. "If you walked out on the edge and then fell in, you'll probably be swept under the ice because the water's moving, unlike a pond or a lake."

For that reason, Leatherwood asked residents to avoid approaching the boat launch during the vigil. All children required parental supervision at all times.

"Aiden's missing. We don't need any more," said Leatherwood. "[It's important] to not interfere with the search process. People who are doing the searches are trained. They have special training to know what to look for and where to look for it. Any other searches can hinder that progress."

Blanchard is described as being five-feet tall and 100 pounds. He has brown hair, blue eyes and was last seen wearing a red ski jacket with black ski pants.

No foul play is suspected by law enforcement at this time. Police ask residents who live on or near Old Field Road to check surveillance footage from after 11 a.m. on Feb. 5 in hopes of discovering new information.

Anyone with pertinent information concerning Blanchard's whereabouts is encouraged to call 911, Chicopee Police at (413) 594-1639 or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST.

In a video message to his younger brother, 36-year-old Josh Blanchard offered the following:

"We love you and we want you to come back. No one's angry, and we all miss you," he said.

SUMMER Camp PREVIEW

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Sports

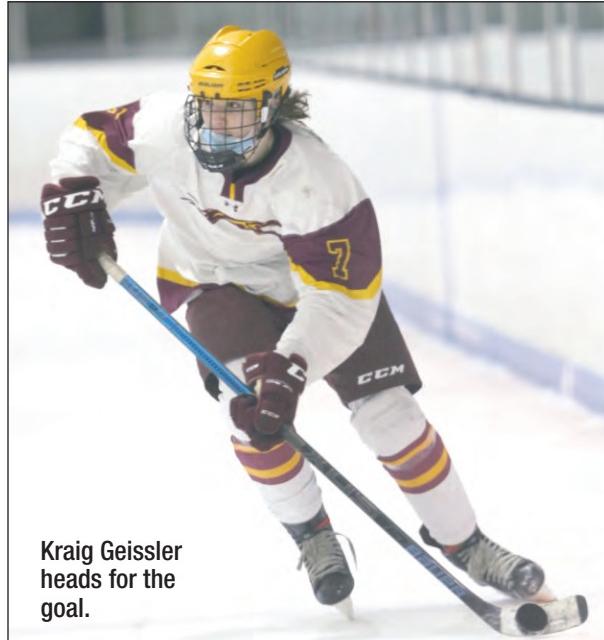
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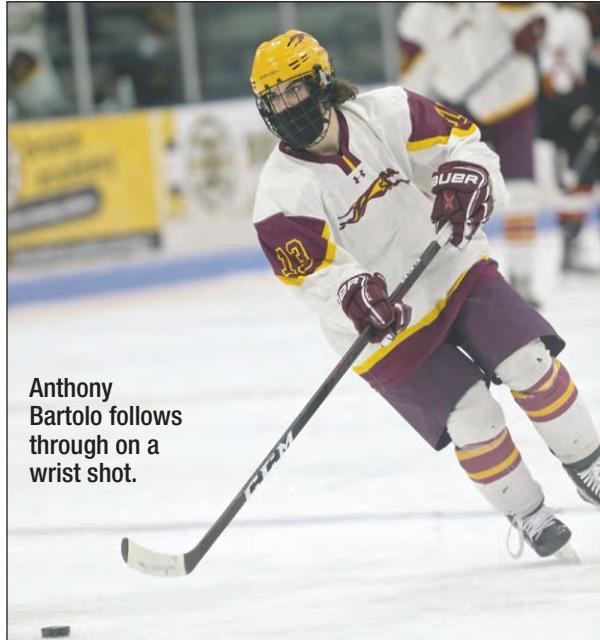
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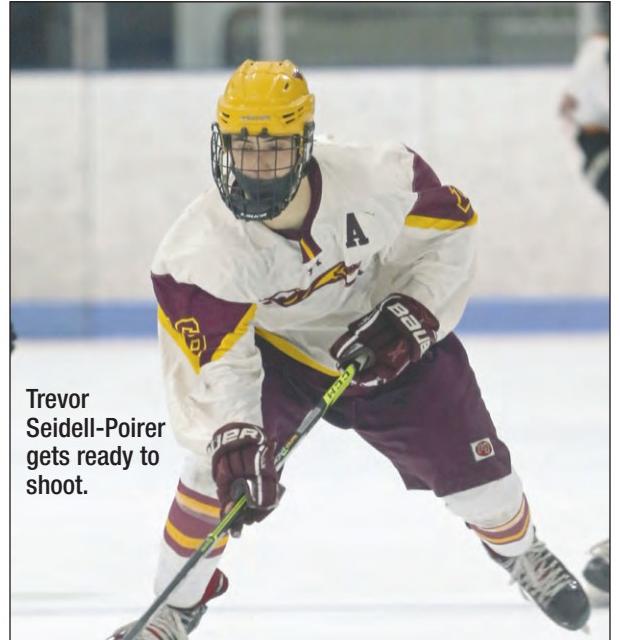
Pacers spoil Tigers return to action



Kraig Geissler heads for the goal.



Anthony Bartolo follows through on a wrist shot.



Trevor Seidell-Poirer gets ready to shoot.

SPRINGFIELD – On Feb. 10, the Chicopee High School ice hockey team defeated South Hadley. The Tigers were returning to the ice for

the first time since its season was reinstated. In the win, Trevor Seidell-Poirer had two goals and an assist. Spencer Gorczyca also scored.

Anthony Bartolo had the fourth goal. Goalie David Shea made 32 saves in the win.

PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

MIAA hoping for successful Fall 2 season

FRANKLIN – The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) COVID-19 Task Force representatives presented Fall II Season sport modifications and recommendations today for the 2020-2021 year to the MIAA Board of Directors.

This presentation culminated the MIAA governance process which included sport-specific sub-committee meetings where

current Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) guidelines were reviewed. Sport sub-committees created or updated sport specific modifications, presented them for approval to the full sport committee and then presented, for approval, to the MIAA Sports Medicine Committee (SMC).

The MIAA Covid-19 Task force subsequently reviewed and approved the modifications.

MIAA Executive Director Bill Gaine stated, "Today's actions by the MIAA's Board of Directors are the culmination of the work of our membership committed to establishing optimal standards of health and safety that will provide the restoration of Fall sports for 1000s of

MIAA student-athletes."

The MIAA Board of Directors voted to approve sport-specific modifications for the Fall II Season. These modifications will continue to be reviewed as they relate to current regulations surrounding COVID-19 and may be modified if necessary. Additional modifications or the decision to participate in MIAA-recognized Fall II sports will be determined

by local school districts and/or their local Boards of Health. You may view the Task Force presentation [HERE](#).

MIAA President Jeffrey Granatino said, "We made adjustments in the fall and had a success first season. We made additional modifications for the winter and our student-athletes

See **MIAA** page 8

Pathfinder defeats Hampden Charter

SPRINGFIELD – Last Friday evening, Hampden Charter was defeated in a home game against Pathfinder Region-

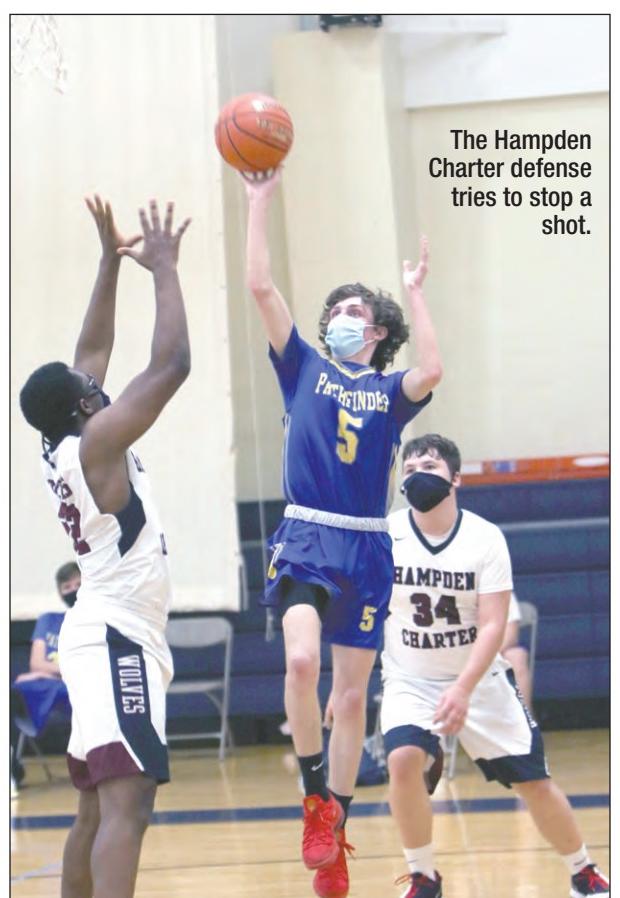
al 65-41. Hampden Charter serves students in the Holyoke, Chicopee, and West Springfield, and Springfield areas.



Cameron Ranck gets ready to shoot.



Charter Kristopher Pacunas heads for the free throw line.



The Hampden Charter defense tries to stop a shot.

SPORTS

Vigeant looks to make his Tri Track mark

SEEKONK — Kurt Vigeant will look to make his mark in the Tri Track Open Modified Series in 2021. The driver of the familiar white and orange No. 7 is set to compete in all of the races in the new season and hopes to continue to make gains into the top 10 as part of one of the most competitive fields in Modified racing.

Vigeant, who has been involved in racing since the age of 12, broke into the sport with AMA Motocross and became the Grand National Champion. He continued into the Pro 4 Modifieds, where he went to Victory Lane, then became a two-time champion at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park in their Modified division. All of this experience drove his interest to move into the Tour-Type Modifieds, where he runs today, specifically with Tri Track. He's hoping to make gains on his previous efforts during the 2021 season.

"When I started in these types of Modifieds we ran a few races, then totaled the car and it took two years to fix it because we didn't have the funds," Vigeant said. "I enjoy the schedule that Tri Track has with the bullring tracks. I don't think anyone is content where they



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Kurt Vigeant will be among hopefuls in Tri Track series this year.

are running, until you are on the top."

Vigeant is no stranger to the series, competing at all of the tracks that Tri Track will visit during the 2021 season. Enjoying the bullrings makes Tri Track a perfect fit -- as the series makes the schedule based off the tracks that equal the playing field and put the capabilities of the driver into the forefront.

"I've had good success when it comes to qualifying for the features," Vigeant said. "I think I've only missed two since I started run-

ning with Tri Track. But I'm lacking those finishes... I need some luck. It's tough to compete, as an underfunded team, on a series with a lot of talent. But we are fighting, and I couldn't do it without my sponsor and my team."

Vigeant carries the colors of Gary Rice Equipment and Service on the car, and has a variety of crew members that are regulars with him at the track. He is always looking for additional sponsors to help him get through the season, whether big or small. Crew members include Rob Anderson, Josh O'Connell, Joey Pole, Billy Bodreau (crew chief), Melissa O'Connell, Dennis West, Carroll Vescovi and others, when necessary and available.

"The crew supports me no matter what happens," Vigeant said. "My mom and dad -- they are first -- my dad is a die-hard. His health has been going south a bit, so we are just taking it race-by-race and remembering every moment we have together."

His goal in the 2021 season is to continue to take it race-by-race, improve on his finishing positions and aim for the top-five in the six series events.

"I'm hoping that this year we can run much better and run in the front," Vigeant said. "It comes down to how much money we can gather as a small team. We go to each race, buy four or five tires, and do the best we can. We do it for the love of the sport."

The Tri Track Open Modified Series season opens in May at Monadnock Speedway. For more information on the series, visit tritrackmodifieds.com and follow the series on social media. For more information on Souza Media, visit kylesouza.com.

Bay State Games partners with charter schools

WOBURN — Bay State Games is excited to announce new partnerships with the Massachusetts Charter School Athletic Organization (MCSAO) and New England Preparatory School Athletic Conference (NEPSAC). Bay State Games has a long history with the Massachusetts Secondary School Athletic Directors Association, and now with this new partnership with the MCSAO and NEPSAC, BSG is hoping to reach all Massachusetts high school students. Both the MCSAO and NEPSAC organize athletic championships for their respective leagues and reach thousands of student-athletes every year. Bay State Games hopes this partnership will help share athletic and educational opportunities to every high school student-athlete in Massachusetts. "The MCSAO is very excited to partner with an organization like the Bay State Games. Working together we are hopeful to provide more opportunities for student-athletes to compete in different high-level athletic tournaments and venues," says Drew Betts, Co-Executive Director of the Massachusetts Charter School Athletic Organization. "In addition, we are pleased that this will be additional avenues for student athletes within the MCSAO to work with the Bay State Games to promote teamwork and sportsmanship in support of the Games mission." Of the new partnership, NEPSAC President George Tahan said, "We at NEPSAC are thrilled to be able to partner with the Bay State Games and help afford NEPSAC student-athletes with additional opportunities to participate in a number of sports and event offerings. NEPSAC's principle purpose aligns seamlessly with the Bay State Games mission of 'promoting personal development, education, physical fitness, teamwork, and sportsmanship' and we at NEPSAC look forward to long and rewarding relationships." Offering opportunities to compete in Bay State Summer and Winter Games events, Future Leaders Scholarship Program, High School Ambassador Program, and Sportsmanship Program as well as coaching opportunities for high school coaches is the goal of this partnership. "Ensuring that all high school student-athletes in Massachusetts are aware of and have access to all Bay State Games programs is an important goal of our organization," said Executive Director, Kevin Cummings. "These collaborations with the NEPSAC and MCSAO will help us achieve this goal and highlight the outstanding athletes, coaches, and administrators from both organizations.

Hampshire association seeking umpires

REGION — The Hampshire Franklin Baseball Umpire Association (HFBUA) is planning to conduct classes for the 2021 baseball season following all recommended COVID-19 protocols including the possibility of on-line instruction. The association covers umpiring of scholastic baseball for all of Hampshire and Franklin county schools registered under MIAA and several other baseball leagues in the area. If you are interested in umpiring baseball or obtaining further information regarding the upcoming classes please contact Roger Booth - Secretary/Treasurer of the HFBUA via email at quilhunter@comcast.net.

MIAA from page 7

have been actively engaged since December. Now we are hopeful that with the guidance from the Governor's office and of EEA, along with the work of our various committees, that we will be able to have a safe and successful Fall II Season." You may view all MIAA sport modifications on the MIAA COVID-19 webpage.

The following sports have been approved by the MIAA for the Fall II Season: Cheerleading, Football, Indoor Track, and Unified Basketball. The following sports were approved for the Fall I Season, however, local districts may have decided to move them to the Fall II Season: Cross Country, Dance, Golf, Field Hockey, Soccer, Swim and Dive, and Volleyball.

The timeframe of the MIAA Fall II Season is February 22-April 25, 2021. There will be no MIAA sponsored post-season tournament for the Fall II Season.

CLUES ACROSS		CLUES DOWN	
1. Big tech firm	34. Trap	1. Small islands	19. Products
4. Picked	36. Soviet Socialist Republic	2. Skullcap	20. Nostril
10. Type of whale	37. Assn. of oil-producing countries	3. Unexplained events	21. Surprise Icelandic politician
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12. New England state	40. Emit coherent radiation	5. Beloved baseball announcer	25. Conclusive acts
14. Common gibbon	41. Atomic #81	6. Repulsive	29. Inform on
15. Tall coniferous tree	42. Orthodox Jewish college	7. Northern European languages	31. Grinding tooth
16. State capital	48. Herbs	8. Match or surpass	32. Keep up
18. Making a liquid muddy	50. Ran after	9. Northeast	33. Tablelands
22. Vinegary	51. Begin again	12. Chew the fat	35. Raising
23. Peninsula	52. Named	13. Innovative industry	38. Mythical creature
24. Thee	53. Barbary sheep	17. Land to put down to grass	41. Hums
26. Atomic #55	54. Unwell	18. Postscript	43. Mountain in Antarctica
27. Used in units of measurement	55. Postscript	19. Northeast	44. Neighborhood in Manhattan
28. Welsh female name	56. Drivers	20. One point east (clockwise) of due north	45. Distinctive practice
30. Arab ruler title	58. One point east (clockwise) of due north	21. Innovative industry	46. Vice president
31. One's mother	59. Prim	22. Chew the fat	47. Contributes to
	60. A facility	23. Land to put down to grass	49. Small bones
		24. Land to put down to grass	56. Oil company
		25. Land to put down to grass	57. Empire State

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SENIORS

Gentle exercise with Ryan via Zoom

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging offers "Gentle Exercise with Ryan" Via Zoom, Mondays and Fridays at 12 p.m.

This class focuses on functional movement & fun. This is an online class. Join Ryan every Monday and Friday at 12 p.m. The Zoom link is shared on RiverMills Center's Facebook page. If you do not have Facebook, please contact RiverMills Center at (413) 534-3698 to provide your email address for the Zoom link to be emailed to you. Please save the Zoom link as that is the link you will use each class.

Zoom Meditation with Michelle

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging offers "Meditation with Michelle" Via Zoom, Thursdays at 12 p.m.

Are you feeling stressed? Do you want to learn how to relax? Join us for Meditation on Zoom. This class is led by Michelle Zemba LMT. This is an online class. The Zoom link will be shared on RiverMills Center's Facebook page. If you do not have Facebook, please call RiverMills Center at (413) 534-3698 to provide your email address for the Zoom link to be sent to you. Please save the link as this will be the link you will use for each class.

Zoom Tai Chi with Michelle

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging offers "Tai Chi with Michelle" Via Zoom, Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.

Experience the many slow and gentle benefits of Tai Chi Fit/Qigong. The class is led by Michelle Zemba LMT, Certified in Tai Chi/Qigong. This is an online class. The Zoom link will be shared on RiverMills Center's Facebook page. If you do not have Facebook, please call RiverMills Center at (413) 534-3698 to provide your email address for the Zoom link to be sent to you. Please save the link as this will be the link you will use for each class.

Tuesday yoga at RiverMills Center

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging will be offering Zoom Yoga on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Caitlin Lavin, Certified Yoga Instructor, will be leading classes. These classes are free and the Zoom links are available on RiverMills Center's Facebook page or by calling (413) 534-3698.

Senior Services announces assistance with vaccine registration

REGION - Greater Springfield Senior Services, Inc. (GSSSI) is now assisting older adults with registering for the COVID-19 vaccine through the online registration portals.

Interested parties can call GSSSI at (413) 781-8800 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) to be connected to a highly trained, bilingual team of dedicated Information and Referral Specialists. Staff are ready to assist with online sign-ups and are available to answer any questions.

PUBLIC NOTICES

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758**

Docket No. HD21P0242EA
Estate of: Susie M Beaudry
Date of Death: 07/25/2020

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Marcelle Bastien of Chicopee, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Marcelle Bastien of Chicopee, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in an unsupervised administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/12/2021.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a time-

ly written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 12, 2021

Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/19/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758**
Docket No. HD13P1559EA
In the matter of:
Annette J. Bouchard
Date of Death: 03/05/2011
CITATION ON PETITION TO MODIFY BOND
G.L. c. 1908, §3-604

To all interested persons:
A Petition has been filed by: Bar Plan Mutual Ins. Co. of Saint Louis MO requesting that the Court enter a Decree and Order modifying the bond of the Personal Representative and for any other relief as requested in the Petition.

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before 10:00 a.m. on 03/22/2021.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

The estate is being administered by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but recipients are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 05, 2021

Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/19/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758**
Docket No. HD21P0241EA
Estate of: Gerald E Guiel
Also known as:
Gerald Edward Guiel
Date of Death: 10/08/2020
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Jeffrey M Gulel of South Hadley, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Jeffrey M Gulel of South Hadley, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in an unsupervised administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 12, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/19/2021

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 12, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/19/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-8600**
Docket No. HD21P0210EA

Estate of:
Russell S Paradis
Also Known As:
Russell Paradis
Date of Death:
12/08/2020

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner Katherine Paradis of Northampton, MA.

Katherine Paradis of Northampton, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve with surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 12, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/19/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
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Docket No. HD21P0210EA

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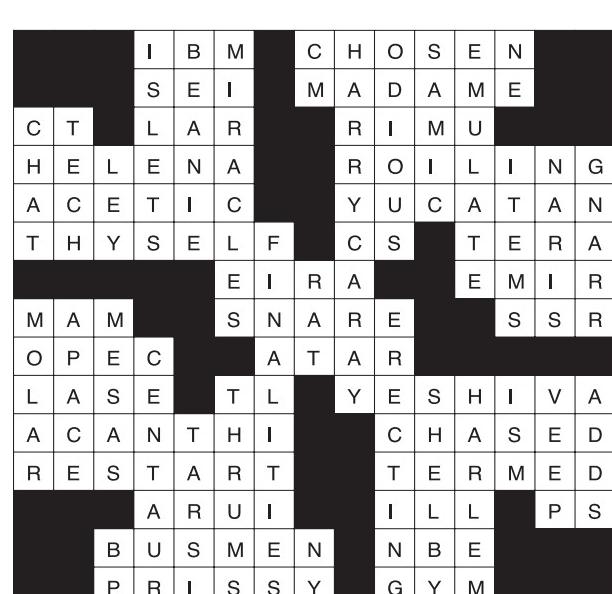
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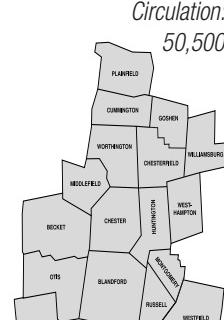
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Is it safe for pregnant women to get the coronavirus vaccine?

SPRINGFIELD – Is it safe for pregnant women to get the coronavirus vaccine?

That's a question that two Baystate Medical Center doctors contemplated together recently – one a primary care physician at Baystate Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center, who is also board certified in infectious diseases, and the other an OB/GYN.

Dr. Amanda Westlake learned in September that she was expecting her third child. As an infectious disease specialist, when she visited with her OB/GYN, Dr. Katie Barker of Baystate Wesson Women's Group, she was already familiar with much of the emerging literature on pregnancy and COVID-19. It is concisely stated on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website that:

"Based on what we know at this time, pregnant people are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people. Additionally, pregnant people with COVID-19 might be at increased risk for other adverse outcomes, such as preterm birth."

But when the two doctors

came together to discuss whether Dr. Westlake should get the coronavirus vaccine, the answer wasn't that simple – there is no scientific study on whether or not the vaccine is safe for pregnant women.

"Pfizer did not include pregnant women in its clinical trials to establish the safety and efficacy of their vaccine (it is common in clinical trials to exclude pregnant women). That was unfortunate because our professional organization, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has long advocated for women to be involved in vaccine trials," said Dr. Barker.

"As a result, we do not have specific data on which to make a decision about pregnant women receiving the vaccine. However, we have no reason now to suspect that it would work differently or be harmful to pregnant women, which is something I tell my patients every day," she added.

And, when studies are completed on the vaccine's effects on pregnant women now being inoculated against the virus, Dr. Barker said she would be surprised if they discover anything unexpected.

Recognizing that pregnant women everywhere would need guidance, the Shared Decision-Making: COVID Vaccination in Pregnancy working group at the University of Massachusetts Medical School - Baystate was created under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Schoenfeld, an Emergency Medicine physician at Baystate.

Dr. Schoenfeld, a shared decision-making researcher in the hospital's Institute for Healthcare Delivery and Population Science, has experience making decision aids to help patients make decisions together with their doctors. Because of the lack of evidence to guide recommendations for pregnant women, a shared decision aid was needed to help women understand the risks and benefits and the unknowns.

"Shared decision making helps patients understand their choices and come to an informed decision with their doctors about their care. It is a way for patients to have their voices heard when deciding what the next step in their medical care will be. And a decision aid is a tool to help facilitate a discussion between a doctor and

patient such as, "Should I get the coronavirus vaccine," said Dr. Schoenfeld.

The clinical researcher noted that "in general the vaccine is highly recommended and safe" and although there was no hard data available on pregnancy and the vaccine, it wasn't as if "there was no evidence at all about the vaccine to share in an aid."

"Certainly, for many pregnant women the pros outweigh the cons," said Dr. Schoenfeld, who noted that when putting together the decision aid it was important to involve multiple stakeholders, such as maternal-fetal medicine experts, COVID experts, and pregnant healthcare workers.

The result is a six-page decision aid on the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines that starts with the basics: "I'm pregnant. Should I get a COVID vaccine?" It discusses a woman's options, the benefits and risks of getting an mRNA COVID vaccine, and other information to help pregnant women make an informed decision. There are also additional details about breastfeeding, noting the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM)

and the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) report that there is no reason to believe that the vaccine affects the safety of breastmilk.

Since completing the aid, it has been shared via Twitter and with various national professional networks such as maternal fetal medicine doctors, obstetricians, emergency medicine doctors, and medical informatics leaders. Based on feedback from those who have received the aid, it is being used at Boston Medical Center, Kaiser Southern California, Mass General Hospital, and in multiple other practices including Texas, and all around the country.

"We have received so much positive feedback. In fact, one woman from Costa Rica asked if we had a Spanish version of the document. We were able to quickly create Spanish and Russian versions and have made them available as well," said Dr. Schoenfeld.

To view the latest version of the decision guide, visit: <https://www.baystatehealth.org/covid19/vaccine/pregnancy>

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Tetreault moves up: firefighter becomes lieutenant

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

CHICOPEE – On Jan. 28, long-time Chicopee firefighter Robert Tetreault was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Over the course of his 23-year career with the Chicopee Fire Department, Tetreault's passion for serving his hometown has only risen.

"I grew up in Chicopee," Tetreault said. "It's an honor. It's the brotherhood of the fire department and the fact that you're helping out the community and doing your part to save lives. It's a good feeling."

Much has changed since Tetreault first took on the job, but many of his daily duties have remained the same.

Each day, Tetreault inspects gear, completes equipment checks on the trucks, monitors oxygen in levels in the air tanks, stocks his jump kit and helps ensure the station is clean and fully operational.

"As a lieutenant, you still have to do all the same things, but you just oversee the firefighters. You're still doing it with them, but you're responsible for them," Tetreault said.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented the department with a myriad of new challenges, many of which they were well-prepared to face. Tendencies such as hand-washing and maintaining a clean workspace were already common among Chicopee firefighters.

Department members are still able to complete their traditional duties while adhering to the many protocols that are currently in place.

It's outside of the station that the threat posed by the pandemic becomes imminent. On all calls, personal protective equipment is a must.

"We can't, unfortunately, just rush into a building like we used to," said Tetreault. "If it's a [COVID-19] case, you go to the door; you check if the [individual] can make it to the



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY THE CHICOPEE FIRE DEPARTMENT
City Clerk Keith Rattell [middle right] swears in Robert Tetreault as a fire lieutenant on Jan. 28.

door safely and without any harm to themselves. If not, then we'll send the guys in, in full PPE, to go in and help transfer the patient to the ambulance."

Tetreault noted that the department, as a whole, "has done a fantastic job of keeping [COVID-19] at bay," which he considers to be incredible when considering the number of calls the department responds to.

Despite his seniority within the department, Tetreault said there is still much to learn. He noted that a firefighter can never know everything; there is always more knowledge to be gained.

"Even someone with 32 years can learn something from someone brand new. It's not always the teacher teaching; sometimes the student can teach the teacher," said Tetreault. "There's always a new, more efficient way to do something. If you think you know everything and have seen everything, you're lying to yourself and putting yourself at risk."

Moving forward, Tetreault anticipates he will remain passionate about the profession he entered nearly a quarter century ago.

He greatly appreciated the Jan.



[L to R] Mayor John Vieau, Fire Lieutenant Robert Tetreault and Fire Chief Dan Stamborski celebrate Tetreault's promotion on Jan. 28.

28 ceremony in City Hall in honor of his promotion, which was attended by Mayor John Vieau and Fire Chief Stamborski.

It's Tetreault's hope that he can inspire someone from the next generation, just as he was inspired many years ago.

"It's nice to be able to say, 'This is why I've done it and this is what it means to me; maybe, it could mean the same to you.' I would say that if you're thinking about it, try starting off as an EMT or paramedic, seeing what the medical half of the job is. If you can't do the medical portion, it's [difficult] to do the job," said Tetreault.

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